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conditions that might have been known to the critics, or have been appreciated by them with a little thought. It was due, generally, to the failure to understand crying needs—for instance the need of the soldiers for dancing and for the companionship of good women, or the necessity of Y work in the cities for the protection of the health and the morals of our boys.

And what was the actual accomplishment? The entire book answers that question, but a few significant estimates may be quoted. Says Mr. Francis E. Powell, head of the Standard Oil Company's interests in Great Britain, "The fact is, we built up in France in a year an organization equal to that which it took the Standard Oil Company twelve years to build up in Great Britain, and the Standard could never have had the perfect organization that they now have if they had been obliged to change their best men every six months." The author herself sums up as follows: "With forty per cent of the required personnel, with forty per cent of the required ocean tonnage, with thirty per cent of the land transportation required for a covering job, *the Y performed ninety per cent of all the welfare work done overseas for the best-served army in the war.*"

Miss Mayo's book is almost bewildering by reason of the variety and largeness of the interesting topics that it treats, and because of the intensity of expression which constantly spurs attention and gives no rest to the reader who likes the restfulness of habitual ideas. No reader can help being impressed, however, with two thoughts—the need of disinterested service in war (not to say, also, in peace), and the combination of powerful organization with individual enthusiasm that is required for the successful carrying-out of such work on a really worth-while scale.

THE GREAT ADVENTURE OF PANAMA. By Philippe Bunau-Varilla. Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Company.

When a child of eleven years, Philippe Bunau-Varilla "witnessed with teeth set and fists clinched," the collapse of France in 1870-71. Fifteen years later, he became the chief engineer of the Panama Canal, the financial failure of which undertaking in French hands seemed to be a reproach upon the nation. Two ambitions have ruled his life: the one, "to see France washing the slate of history with Prussian blood"; the other, to see French genius and enterprise justified by the completion of the Panama Canal. He has lived to realize both desires, and to the realization of each he has contributed his whole strength. Fighting bravely at Verdun, he lost his right leg from above the knee. But for him, it is more than doubtful that the United States would have selected Panama as the route for the inter-oceanic canal. Now he has written a book connecting the two passions of his life in a striking manner.

In effect, M. Bunau-Varilla maintains two closely related theses, to each of which a great deal of weight must be allowed.

In the first place, France and civilization owed their salvation primarily to two things: the "75" gun and the Panama Canal. French genius produced the "75," and French wit completely misled those German spies who were on the look-out for the new invention. But

German cunning, by obtaining a practical monopoly of the materials necessary for high explosives nearly deprived France of the advantage which she actually gained. Panama saved the situation. It revived American regard for France, it led Germany into operations in the Caribbean which opened the eyes of the United States to the true character of that nation, and it provided a means for the nitrates of Chile to reach the battlefields of France. During the war America furnished France with a quantity of ammunition sufficient for firing about 250,000,000 shots with the "75" gun; the Canal gave passage to more than seven and a half billion pounds of nitrates.

In the second place it was German intrigue which prevented the ratification by Colombia of the Canal treaty. In the part of the narrative dealing with this matter, one is not to expect a well-documented exposé. Nevertheless, the author's reasoning, pieced out by what we now know of German methods, is plausible in a high degree; and, as M. Bunau-Varilla remarks, it is possible to detect the smell of the serpent even when his trail is scarcely visible. The outstanding fact is that the Colombians obviously expected that the Canal would be built on terms more advantageous to them than those offered by the United States; the scheme for a strictly Colombian Canal was plainly camouflage, since only a great Power could successfully undertake the work, and the only Power except the United States which had at that time the ability and the motive to attempt such a thing was Germany. The nearly contemporary German activities in Venezuela enable one to see the outlines of a plot with fair distinctness. The evidence is perhaps strong enough to guide policy if not to be received as history.

At all events, it was fortunate for the world that M. Bunau-Varilla, inspired by his two ruling passions, acted just as he did. The story of how he influenced the choice for Panama as against Nicaragua, and of how he subsequently, by the exercise of the most delicate judgment, assured the success of the revolution is more interesting than are most novels of the intensely plotted kind. More than once the great result which, on the highest grounds and with the greatest foresight, he was laboring to bring about might have been defeated by a slight turn of circumstances, a momentary want of nerve or resource. A characteristic and entertaining bit is the story of how the author offset Nicaraguan propaganda by means of a postage stamp. Official documents had been produced to show that the volcanoes of Nicaragua were harmless if not altogether extinct, and hence that the canal would not be exposed to the danger of earthquakes or like disasters; but the Nicaraguan postage stamp, showing a volcano in full eruption proved a more effective official document than anything that could be brought forward on the other side. Again, if M. Bunau-Varilla had not calculated on slight, though to a keen mind conclusive, evidence that a United States war ship would arrive at the Isthmus on a certain day, and if he had not had the courage to treat his inference as a fact, the revolutionists in Panama would not have dared to take the necessary steps in time.

There is perhaps more rhetoric than evidence in certain parts of this narrative; yet it would not be surprising if evidence as yet uncovered should sometime confirm nearly all of the author's opinions. If the emphasis repeatedly laid upon the effect of the building of the

canal upon Franco-American relations seems somewhat disproportionate, we must give at least fair consideration to a point of view urged by one having intimate and personal knowledge of the feeling in both countries. Few fact stories, it may be said in conclusion, tell so clearly as does this of M. Bunau-Varilla's just how things were done and what motives actuated the doers.

THE FOOLISH LOVERS. By St. John G. Ervine. New York: The Macmillan Company.

To the public of Dickens and Thackeray, one thinks, a story like *The Foolish Lovers* would have been rather uninteresting; it would not have seemed robust enough either in idea or in sentiment. To the taste of to-day it is highly acceptable. It is, in fact, one of the best of that type of novel, notable for artistic reality and for sensitive humanity, which has been developed in the struggle between romance and photographic realism. Modern taste hardly asks for anything really better than such a suave and frank, sympathetically critical and wisely humorous treatment of life as is found in this book. Its tone just suits the mood of the cultivated man or woman of today who has outgrown youthful tastes but has retained a certain independence of view-point. Many of our best novels nowadays are simply modest and pleasing studies of life, with a good deal of an author's quick observation and unusual personality in them. It is probable that a story like *The Foolish Lovers* represents much more truly the actual literary mind of the time than does the work of the intellectually restless radicals or that of the emotionally restless, the ever-protesting and experimenting, realistic-romantics.

The people in *The Foolish Lovers* are all, more than anything else, like the folks we know—not one seems the least bit artificial;—yet each has his own distinctive characteristics and his very real *numen*, his inviolable personality, so that what happens to him must arouse genuine, though slight, emotion. "Uncle Matthew," the romantic dreamer, though not strikingly original, is not like any other romantic dreamer one has ever known or read about; and "Uncle William" is a triumph in the way of a commonplace character who isn't really commonplace. There is a great deal of what used to be called "the mystery of womanhood" about Eleanor" along with just an ordinary, practical mind and nice instincts. All the persons of the story experience things in their own way—not in your way or mine or Mr. Ervine's. So the narrative always has freshness, and in the whole picture there is a commendable "unity in variety."

John MacDermott is a bit different from the rest. This young man, with a trace of Barry Lyndon in his make-up and a good deal of naive youthfulness, might have been, perhaps, a genius or a leader. But his unusual gift seems to have exhausted itself in an original wooing; and after writing mediocre plays and novels in the course of a journalistic experience in London, he found that the more excellent way was to return to his native town of Ballyards in Ulster and to go to work in his uncle's general store. Of course, his wife had a good deal to do with the decision; but even apart from this very natural factor, John MacDermott turns out to be of much more